REWRITE The Magazine of Effective Writing

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WHAT IS "GOOD" IN WRITING?

Everywhere today there is change going on. There always is change, but today the swing in one direction or another is more violent and the difference between conservative and liberal or leftwing more pronounced. Because of all this it is more difficult for writer artists to check themselves against eternals and decide whether they are following a good course.

Here at WCS House, Elva frequently raises the question as to whether we are teaching, training writers along the right lines. "We do not read enough stories," she says, "from the published magazines. How do we know but that styles are changing and we will eventually be left high and dry on the beach?" My answer to that is the classic one that Miss Esther Forbes made one summer at Durham. In a workshop session in answer to a question, Esther said, "Fashions constantly change. Do styles also change? No. Style is part of the woman herself. A woman who was stylish, say in the Gay Nineties, would be stylish today. Style is the safe anchor. It is continually different, but the essence of it remains always the same." Those are not exactly Esther's words, but they are the expression and feeling of what she expressed. I have never forgotten the heart of her message to writers on that hot August afternoon.

No, styles of writing may change, just as fashions do, but the fundamentals of "good" writing remain the same throughout the year and indeed, through all eternity. Clarity & force (effectiveness through skilled use of emphasis) are the elements you will see the professors of English continually hammering in their new and modernized textbooks. Each generation will have new ideas and new ways of handling these, but the basic truths and methods of living are pretty much the same. Our ancestors did not fly; they knew little of such things as atomic bombs, but war was a constant scourge. We have learned to prevent many illnesses before they strike, and to prolong life. But in our swifter, tenser civilization we wear out bodies before their appointed time. And by our creation of synthetic foods, we have invented new diseases that our predecessors never knew. So the results in the long run are not much different although they take longer.

There is one change, however, that shortsighted folk are apt to overlook. And that's the fact that writing is getting more difficult all the time. Although education frequently rolls off the backs of those who are not intended to be scholars, there is an opportunity for more persons to be able to do a competent job as a writer. Millions write today where Shakespeare faced the competing rivalry and ambition of only a few. We have to write exceptionally well today merely to earn a right to be heard.

But still another factor makes writing an infinitely harder trade today. It is the advent of all the new mechanical media. Photographic equipment that is able to accurately recreate scenes and character with a beautiful fidelity of line and color and even overtones of implication and meaning, can present a surface illusion of realism far more "real" than anything that the most skilled, imaginative writer can duplicate with words. I have often said that any writer can master the adjustments necessary to write for a radio mike, a movie camera and sound track, and now for the television cameras. But can he so improve his own technique so it challenges the ability of those media to tell a story more swiftly, more naturally and better than he can. Only so long as authors are story-tellers, able to give the reader more emotional satisfaction, will the medium of a printed book or magazine remain extant.

In the final analysis every "reader" is a lone, individual human being, even when going to a theater or sitting amid a group in front of a television screen. We all of us, instinctively, wish to enlarge our inner awareness of life, to extend our emotional experience. That is why on even terms the theater (stage) with its rich, true personification of life in terms of the living actors and the printed word with its incomparable, magic ability to fuse the rich overtone values of words with the complete privacy, and absorption of an ecstatic emotional experience, can always beat any mechanical medium hands down. That is why the movies have refused ever to face such competition, when it is possible for them to stifle it by buying up and keeping closed legitimate theaters. I am reliably informed that television in some parts of this country has reduced movie attendance as much as 40%. The stage can easily make it 90% any day that it wishes to put trained actors in a theater side by side with a motion picture show on even terms of comfort and price.

Since you are writing for the many, & yet always for the individual, who must respond emotionally as well as intellectually to the story or factual report you offer him, your treatment must be skilled and psychologically effective. Human beings change their "approach" to life. But intellectually and emotionally they have changed very little in a thousand years. That is why I tell Elva the writer who masters the basic understanding of how to tell a story effectively and to make the human heart turn over, will always find himself "in style", and in demand.

This is not the place to teach the art of writing in one easy lesson. In spite of the fact that many writers think there is merely a trick to it that can be formularized & sold in 25¢ pamphlets, "six for a buck", you have to study the fundamentals. But if you do sincerely, you will be "good" as a writer.

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KEEP OUR DEMOCRACY CLEAN! — William E. Harris, Elva Ray Harris, Editors. — PEACE IS YOUR NECESSITY

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DO WE WANT THE BEST DEMOCRACY?

How many Americans have read the signs of the Kansas City murders correctly? Do they recognize them as a definite symptom of the cancer that can destroy our American democracy? Hitler started on the road to power at the head of just such a gang of hoodlums as flouted government and the integrity of our democratic institutions. German businessmen and politicians made a deal with the world's greatest gangster, only to find they'd been sucked into the arms of a monster they could not control. Syndicates such as the one controlling the numbers racket, are interested only in "protection" and easy money. But suppose a would-be dictator got it into his head to control the Syndicate? We have had ambitious politicians capable of performing such a trick. Suppose the Communists started infiltrating into the numbers racket.

The Republicans are sniping gleefully over the Kansas City situation. But would they be willing to submit to an impartial investigation of conditions in some of the great Republican strongholds such as certain Pennsylvania cities? Is California the only one of the normally Republican states that is a boss-ridden community? What we need is non-partisan political crime commission similar to our so-called non-partisan foreign policy. But would either major political party, I ask you, dare or be willing to submit to a thoroughgoing investigation into conditions anywhere in the land where honest citizens, if they had the courage of their convictions might raise an alarm?

Let us face it that there are honest politicians. But very few who have never built a machine, never worked a deal of which they would be ashamed, if they faced the truth in the secret recesses of their hearts. If this were not true, we would have a corrupt practices law that is not full of weasel words, an insult to the intelligence of a five-year old.

There is not a day goes by in which we do not see proved the truth that was written in blood on the floor of a Kansas City political club. In Massachusetts a former mayor of Boston received a full pardon after serving a sentence in a federal penitentiary, at the very moment when his successor has been collecting large sums of money, which contractors have willingly handed back to the City rather than face court action for cheating on street pavement jobs they were given by the pardoned mayor's administration. In Washington Pres. Truman vetoed a bill, which would have freed the natural gas industry from an annoying, but proper, government regulation similar to that experienced by the gas & electric public utilities. This bill, supposedly giving the industry full opportunity for a price hike that would have cost millions of citizens hundreds of millions of dollars, was steered through the Legislature by a member who is a multi-millionaire producer of natural gas. Is that true democracy? A judge, sitting on a case involving his own financial interests, would normally have considered it unethical for him to rule on the merits of the law involved.

No, the Kansas City murders are a serious stain on a city ironically just decking itself out in its Sunday best to celebrate its Centennial. But the cancer runs much deeper and in the very blood of our Nation. Either we believe in Democracy and are willing for it to require of us the price necessary and fitting to pay for it, or we are willing to sell our souls for mongrel principle that's worth nothing. Lincoln said a nation that is half slave and half free, will not long endure. It is the same with democratic rule.

Today, we are engaged in a great struggle to prove to the world, that we are prepared to stand by our principles. That we believe all men are created free and equal, that all governments should be "of and by and for the people". But if we permit Democracy, on our own doorstep, to be bludgeoned and cynically mocked by politicians and gangsters, the Communists are not only given strength by us, but also we lose every shred of self-respect and honesty in the face of the nations of the world.

Today, America is the hope of the world & the last fortress of free ideals. But surely the time is rapidly coming, when we must put up or shut up. We must stand fast & defend our moral integrity through action, or resign ourselves to becoming a second class power, just another pawn of Moscow. This is the age when America will either come of age and lead the world back from the cliff, or we join the panic and be trampled upon. Which?

FUNDAMENTALS OF GOOD POETRY

By Elva Ray Harris

"WHAT'S FUNNY?"

It is sometimes extremely difficult to tell what is funny and what is not. The subject matter of many humorous poems, and cartoons would, under ordinary circumstances, be considered tragic. You can hardly pick up a current magazine without seeing a cartoon that depicts some kind of accident to an automobile. Of course, the favorite picture usually is that of a car crashing into a tree. And a close second is the image of a demolished automobile being brought home, behind the tow truck. In reality, there is nothing funny about an accident of that sort. Lives are frequently lost.

But one reason such a joke gets a laugh is because it strikes a sympathetic cord in the reader. Take, for instance, the cartoon in a recent COLLIER'S, in which a woman points out to her companion the advantage of driving a snow covered car. Her husband has not noticed yet that she has smashed it up. Nobody, man or woman, likes to break the news, that he has dented the family car, or even put a first scratch on it when it is new. So, jokes like that put the emphasis on the universal problem of "'fessing up" instead of the accident.

The SAT. EVE. POST carried a "funny", (as Billy 'Gee calls them), showing in four pictures a woman going to the garage, opening a heavy sliding door, getting into the car, & looking over her shoulder, only to drive out frontwards, taking the end of the garage along with her. This again strikes a sympathetic note, because we have all been through that uncertain stage when operating a car & getting a desired result had not yet become automatic to our reflexes.

There is a fundamental principle, though, behind this type of humor. Think of the four pictures again and you will see how cleverly they build a sequence that apparently emphasizes the natural and familiar. In reality, however, it plants an absurdity. There is a sudden, unexpected switch, which hits readers with the shock of the surprise twist. It allows them to find release in a feeling of superiority.

Certain types of people seem to carry the laugh potential. The ever cheerful person, a man or woman who makes the best of a tragic situation is good for many laughs. Take the mother who called the doctor, asking him to come quickly, because her little boy swallowed a fountain pen. The doctor replied he'd hurry, but asked the mother what she was doing in the meantime. Cheerfully she answered that she was using a pencil. Again it's a surprise twist, so absurd it makes us laugh.

Another type of character that invokes an equally loud laugh is the person who shows a great concern over a minor casualty while a greater one is taking place. The SAT. REVIEW OF LITERATURE carried a cartoon showing the window-washer of a large office building on a ledge at a great height. Beside him at the next window is a broken strap. He is looking downward solicitously and saying, "Gesundheit!"

I'm reminded of still another SEP cartoon in which a woman is visiting her husband who is well bandaged in a hospital bed. "It's too bad you had to go through the roof," she comforts him. "Otherwise there isn't a scratch on the car." This is another example of the type in the above paragraph. It also illustrates a further principle of humor. Overlooking the obvious and fastening upon some thing else. Gracie Allen and George Burns in their radio sketches have been using this device for years. She uses it consistently, so consistently and without changing the basic pattern, that her audiences wait to see the wrong conclusion, when the right one is "as clear as the nose on your face". Thus, over the years she has built up a character, and her humor now is cumulative. It seems actually to have more force because of the past years of her having portrayed the same type of person.

And don't overlook either the fact of the woman standing beside the hospital bed fulfilling a familiar and treasured stereotype. She is the kind one expects to henpeck, and heckle her husband, the sort of woman readers enjoy watching because she "wears the— trousers".

In a different manner another radio pair of comics, Fibber McGee and Molly also take advantage of cumulative humor. Conceit & bragging which builds Fibber up, then cuts down his sense of self-importance seems to be the well tried formula. They continually prick a balloon after tipping the reader off so that he foresees the approaching fun.

Conceit which does not end in the levelling off process, is humorous, too. A well-known poet sometimes uses this technique on the lecture platform, bragging so unbelievably about his home town, his county, & his state, that his conceit gets a laugh rather than the disgust it would ordinarily call up.

Though we have talked mostly about radio, and cartoons, the same subjects and types of people can be funny in verse. Indeed, you'll recall that they are used every day, if you will simply think back and remember some of the verses you like written by your favorite exponents of light verse. And to my mind, a special quality of humor is added, when you employ the rhythmic, tripping flow of verse. It is as if the author was participating in a more personal, smiling way. He's enjoying himself, having fun, instead of just being a professional entertainer for whom the job of making people laugh is serious business. And naturally spontaneous laughter is the best.

BOOKS FOR POETS

FIRST PRINCIPLES OF VERSE. Robert Hillyer.. The Writer, Inc. $2.00. A revised edition—this book was first published in 1938—containing some changes, omissions & additions. The chapter "On Reading Aloud", not included in the previous edition, is a good one, helpful for both readers and writers. This volume gives a lot of instruction in its 150 or so pages in a style which is easy to read & digest, even when you may be tired.

WRITING YOUR POEM. Lawrence John Zillman... Funk & Wagnalls Co. $2.75. A book of instruction designed to help the poet become familiar with his tools. A feature not contained in most handbooks is "A Poets' Forum". The author quotes the opinions of several well-known poets as to what poetry is and how it should be written.

NOTE: both of these books are WRITERS' BOOK CLUB Selections.

TELL CONGRESS WHAT YOU THINK!

As I write this, the radio has just given a digest of the reduction of postal service. It is distinctly NOT in the public interest. An apt summary would be: "More for the politicians, less for the people". The politicians can afford to destroy food in a world where millions are starving. They can raise their own salaries and clutter the mail with extensions of their remarks in the Congressional RECORD. They can obstruct the attempt of the Hoover Commission to eradicate waste. But they cannot afford to give the Post Office modern equipment or let it lose a penny! Like killing an elephant to slap a gnat.

SOME MARKET TIPS

It is expected that 400 members of the O.W.A.A. (Outdoor Writers' Association of America) will gather in the Moosehead Lake, Me., Region, June 10-17, for the annual meeting. Two days of workshop forums.

Photographic Contest. OUR DUMB ANIMALS is offering prizes of $25, $15, $5 & ten $3, & 10 $2 for pictures that "tell a story". Send to Contest Editor, 180 Longwood Ave., Boston 15, Mass. Closes: June 1, 1950.

In the April issue OUR DUMB ANIMALS had a a poetry spread feature. Used 13 poems, very short and with an animal tie in naturally.

BETTER HOMES & GARDENS, 5404 Tasting Test Kitchen, Des Moines 3, Iowa, a REWRITE subscriber incidentally, offers $10 & 20 $3 for special recipes on a definite subject. Top winner in April will be "Cook of the Month" in November issue. Closes: last Day of each month.

REDBOOK, Dept. A, 444 Madison Ave., NYC 22, offers a substantial filler prize for We Are to Announce novelties. Study the book.

BOOKS FOR WRITERS

AUTHOR'S GUIDE. For Preparing Ms. and Handling Proof. John Wiley & Sons. $2.00. Originally published in 1924, this book has been revised a number of times. A manual designed primarily for scientific & technical authors, it is unquestionably one of the best books on the subject. It answers practically all questions a book writer may raise. It is priceless to anyone contemplating publication because it shows how a ms. is handled and how to reduce unnecessary expense of revision during galley and page proof days. It also deals thoroughly with the problems, which grammar, punctuation and usage offer. A WRITERS' BOOK CLUB Selection.

THE STORY OF LANGUAGE. Mario Pei. J.B.Lippincott Co. $3.95. A long and detailed examination of the history and growth of words, language and semantics. An interesting background book for any writer, who can learn a great deal about how to use his medium more effectively. A WRITERS' BOOK CLUB Selection.

A RHETORIC OF MOTIVES. Kenneth Burke. Prentice-Hall. $5.00. This is the second in the trilogy along a semantics line. A GRAMMAR OF MOTIVES dealt with the application of logic. This book carries the theme on to a study of rhetoric: its meaning and what its range of usefulness has been over the years. A serious and scholarly book that will interest a select group of thoughtful writers.

CREATIVE PERSONALITY. Chas. Francis Potter. Funk & Wagnalls Co. $2.50. This is a dynamic resume of dynamic thinking: the "growth" of man's awareness of his own personality & the necessity for integrating it with understanding of the greater cosmic consciousness. It is an exciting theory of what true Christianity implies. A theory we believe in sincerely and wholeheartedly. One that is sure to increase a writer's usefulness.

MODERN RHETORIC. Cleanth Brooks & Robert P. Warren. Harcourt, Brace & Co. $3.50. Though published last year and more a book of composition than professional writing technique, we are reviewing it because it is an exceptionally able and helpful book for writers. The readings from such writers as Ernie Pyle, W. B. Yeats and many others are worth a lot. One of the WCS Family called our attention to this book as a positive "must" for writers. We agree. A WRITERS' BOOK CLUB Selection.

DEBBY. Max Steele. Harper & Brothers. $3.00. The 1950 Harper Prize Novel. A remarkable & distinctive book by a young writer of 26. He combines humor and compassion. A book young novelists should read.

EXPLORING OUR NATIONAL PARKS & MONUMENTS... Devereux Butcher. Houghton Mifflin. $3.50. A revised edition of a book that can be useful for writers as a reference and source book.

Buy all your books from WRITERS' BOOK CLUB.

A JUVENILE ADOPTS A SYSTEM

OUR LITTLE FRIEND, Eugene Sample, Mountain View, Cal., has announced a new policy. All mss. received during a given month, will be "held as a group until the month closes. At that time they will be processed, with every possible consideration given to each ms. As a result, writers may expect to receive the check or returned material around the tenth of the following month."

We believe over the long run this efficient plan will speed up rather than delay the final decision. It sounds business-like and if the editor lives up to his promise, we believe it will promote better relations. WCS writers who have sold this small market, are full of praise for Mr. Sample.

NEWS ALONG THE WAY

CHRISTIAN TRAILS, C. E. Schuler, 307 15th St., Huntingdon, Pa., says, "We are interested only in the lead story--about 1,500 words, with a definite Gospel or Spiritual message and background. This type of story, not usually sought today, must be true to God's word and not 'preachy', but quite definite." The quote is taken directly from a letter to us from Mr. Schuler, who points out that CHRISTIAN TRAILS succeeds JUNIOR BOYS & GIRLS, a paper that was discontinued Jan. 1st. A very specific information sheet is sent to every contributor. Payment is on acceptance.

Univ. of New Hampshire Summer Conference. Carroll Towle says: "Session dates are Aug. 14-25. It looks as if the old gang (staff), plus Gorham Munson will be back." This will be the 13th annual session. (Bill's been to all 12 previous ones, full time.)

UNH Boston Reunion. Late in May. It's usually held on a Saturday. Probably at—Hotel Somerset this year.

In April Bill got an acceptance from PROFITABLE HOBBIES, despite a crowded schedule. Lots of mss. and the rush of the biggest and best year ever of the WRITERS' BOOK CLUB are keeping him hustling.

Please Note. We run many items together & use as few headlines as we can. This is for conservation of space, so we can give you a few more items each month.

Stan Kenney commented this month that when reading back all over the years in REWRITE a depressing change in the names mentioned in the "Batting Average" column was noticeable. Yes, the many drop out, become discouraged, or new critics, who advertise quick success and none of the pains of growing, lure them away. (We don't try to compete against that sort of quack medicine. We know they cannot achieve miracles any more than we can.) But it is gratifying that over the years a fine group of writers continues with us, and the WCS Family grows larger and stronger.

A CONTINUING PRIZE CONTEST

Second Annual Baptist Leader Contest, 1703 Chestnut St., Philadelphia 3, Pa., will offer $25 a month from June 1, 1950 to March 1, 1951, for outstanding, dramatic biographies. These will be published in the Baptist LEADER from October, 1950 to June, 1951. A time lapse is necessary for printing. High quality mss. will be held over for further consideration. Person you describe may be dead or living, a neighbor or a celebrity, whose identity must be revealed to the editors. It will not necessarily be passed on to readers. Length: 1,000 words. The winner of the year, chosen from among the monthly winners, will receive an additional $50.

NOTE: notice of this Contest will be given in the June issue of Baptist LEADER. We reprint it in advance through the kindness, first of the editor Betty Poff, and second, of the CHRISTIAN AUTHORS' GUILD, Mrs. Edith F. Osteyee, Media, Pa.

The FAWNLIGHT, Marion Schoeberlein, 430 So. 19th Ave., Maywood, Ill., is an attractively printed, very small little magazine, published by a well known poet. Uses a few poems and one story under 500 words. A prize of $10 for the best poem in the "next three issues" was announced by Ruthe J. Ellingsworth in the March issue. There may still be time.

Arlene Stevens Nell, Editor Childrens Publications, Gospel Trumpet Co., Church of God, Anderson, Ind., was quoted in the April issue of The COMPASS, Christian Authors Guild: "I am looking for some lively Christian biographies, 800-1,500 words, for boys & girls 9-11 years old."

COSMOPOLITAN, 57th & 8th Ave., NYC 19, has become a market for light verse recently. In the April issue it used 14 pieces as filler also 11 cartoons. (Are many of the slicks using a too similar format? It could be. You need to check them constantly these days.)

WE LOSE A GOOD FRIEND

We record with genuine sorrow the death of Mrs. Nellie Bolton Fullam. She was 85 just a few weeks before she did. Though confined to her room for a number of years, she was industrious and wrote interesting historical, and feature articles about her community. We visited her several years ago at home, high on a Vermont hilltop in Randolph, Vt. One of the most beautiful natural settings we have ever seen. Elva and I have lost a friend we shall not soon cease to miss. A brave soul.

HERE'S A CONFERENCE

CHRISTIAN EDITORS' & WRITERS' CONFERENCE, Dr. Benjamin F. Browne, 1703 Chestnut St., Philadelphia 3, Pa. This is a pip! Don't miss it. Especially if you are writing for children. July 5-10th. Good speakers, intensive sessions. Very worthwhile. Wish I could go!

DO YOU WASTE TIME ON POOR THEMES?

In this office we read each month, "Joint Estimates of Current Motion Pictures", (25 W. 44th St., NYC 18,) a key list of recommendations by ten organizations such as the General Federation of Women's Clubs, Children's Film Library Committee, National Council of Jewish Women, etc. It rates motion pictures in five categories of desirability. It also tells who produced, directed, wrote & acted the piece and its original source. In addition it summarizes the plot and the various organizations' reaction. The latter two arguments are especially valuable to writers.

This monthly sheet, incidentally, is available to teachers, editors, and others whose reason for wishing it is reasonable. It is sent once a month free gratis.

One aspect that has surprised me in reading the list is the facility with which intelligent men and women have wasted time, money and energy, lots of all of these, on themes that you would think anyone would recognize as doubtful or taboo. I am not a goody-goody sort of person, but it has always been very plain to me that a writer is not smart when he tries to put over a difficult or doubtfully unethical theme. Sure, I believe a writer should tackle the hard tour-de-force and technically brilliant ideas that come to him. If we always do the easy jobs, our muscles, our emotional and intellectual muscles will gradually get soft. It is only by extending our reach, doing the hard assignments, that we build up our skills. But if writing is a business with us, there is no sense in putting unnecessary strikes on us before hitting the ball out of the yard.

Here are plot summaries indicating what I mean. (1) After running away with a gangster's girl and a sum of money from the ring, a doctor finds new incentive in treating men and women who need his care in an isolated Mexican village....The ethics are very doubtful and the background far removed from most of the audience's interests. If it were a village in America, the interest would mount.

(2) When a conscience-stricken letter carrier attempts to return a portfolio of money stolen in a weak moment, he gets entangled in a net of intrigue and murder. (Comment on this film was that the hero's action was: "improperly motivated") It is very difficult to make an unsympathetic MC look good.

(3) A corrupt jockey makes a final tragic attempt to reform and to keep the love, and respect of his innocent young son. (Comment disapproved of the early scenes of brutality & violence, but admired John Garfield, in his handling of the tender father-son relationship. Play based on an Ernest Hemingway novel, "My Old Man".) This is the type of appealing theme that you can only do justice, if you are prepared to handle it with poetic compassion. Tragedy? Is it necessary?

A MATTER OF IMPORTANCE AND NEWS

The Christopher Awards, if a report in the usually reliable PUBLISHERS' WEEKLY is true, are likely to change radically this year in the character of their objective. In the initial contests the object was to turn up new and promising writers with a Christian ideology they wished to give expression.

Now all that is changed. Joseph A. Duffy, the manager will receive mss. only through a recognized editor or agent. He will consult with these intermediaries about mss., which have already been accepted, or are even published. On the basis of these conferences a number of publishing properties will either be entered or not entered in the awards.

The burden upon the unpublished author is likely to be much greater. A ms. will therefore, soon have to compete against the very best or most merchandisable "properties". It is perfectly possible for the young, hopeful and inexperienced writer to believe that the cards are hopelessly stacked against him. I don't believe they are, because Fr. Keller's philosophy is a dynamic, constructive one. A lot of the public confidence in these prize awards is going to be lost by this "behind-the-scenes" elimination and "screening".

We believe The Christophers could do much good for Christian literature by the Foundation and Fellowship technique. Instead of a single smacking big prize, why not a fund to finance worthy projects or even some of the little magazines that are leading the fight for decent, clean, American writing? To put sufficient money down so that a publisher is able to issue a really good book he couldn't otherwise gamble on, would be the best possible way to support a Christian literature.

Coop Institute. Will be held at Wellesley College, Wellesley, Mass., July 16-22. Cool!

Analysis of writers' conferences. Beginning in the April 22nd issue of The NATION & following it up in the next two issues Rolfe Humphries, poet member of the UNH Conference staff did a series on conferences: values & defects, suggestions for improvement, and a few samples of verse written at conferences. Look it up.

Editorial changes. The purchase of the David McKay Co. (book publishers) by Kenneth T. Rawson & also Quentin A. Bossi has started a chain reaction. Theodore M. Purdy left D.Appleton-Century-Crofts to fill the editorial hole at G.P.Putnam's Sons. And Archibald G. Ogden has left Twentieth Century-Fox Film Co. to fill the hole at D.Appleton-Century-Crofts.

United Music Club is starting another contest for its members. Deadline: Sept. 1, 1951 The Club has been remarkably successful with its attempts to gain recognition among band leaders and jockeys for the songs it considers worthy of Club approval. It is honest.

YOUR GREATEST GIFT!

The gift of an enquiring and logical mind is the one that writers should prize—above all others. As Catholics pray continually for a happy death, so should writers pray for a sense of curiosity and an interest in every phase of the world. Nothing you know really will hurt you. On the contrary, it will some day come in handy. The other day I was telling our little Billy "Gee" something or other about the great world beyond his eyes and ears and sense of touch and feeling. He listened gravely, then exclaimed: "Why, Pop, you know a lot of things." At 4½, we notice the things he misses are few and far between. He constantly puts "two and two together" in a way that surprises and pleases his parents. We think he is learning the joy of discovering things for himself. He constantly comes to us with the cry: "Hum (Daddy), I'll tell you something." And then he explains things to us. And it is frequently something which we have not observed. It is often the sum of some not-so-simple Cause-and-Effect. And if I explain something to him, he goes on that funny, serious little, bursting-to-tell dead run to Mummy, to share it with her. Wonder at life's phenomena is a strange and wonderful gift. Keep it as long as you can!

If you can watch a group of ants in grass forests going about their business. If you can read the signs of nature's remorseless, steady transformation of the earth's surface from one condition to another, you will see practically all of the essentials you need, to be a logical and compelling writer. You, too, will become an elaborator upon the great design. And let me tell you that that is one of the most powerful appeals that you can in your cunning exert upon the reader. There's a time and a place for everything. But other things being equal, when you tap secrets of the universe and the infinite, you raise everyone's curiosity. In that the reader of a comic book and the reader of Plato have a common enthusiasm, a common lust they themselves might not recognize, and which their love of their own chosen medium might cause them to scorn in the other.

"Ah, sweet mystery of life." Explore it!

SELLING IS SERIOUS BUSINESS

Since we at NCS are not, and never pretend to be agents, although we originate a great many sales for writers, we have always been glad to introduce selling writers to reputable agents. We are familiar with the ability or special interests of most of the non-advertising agents, whose integrity in most instances is higher and more certain than is that of the advertising agents, and, naturally, that of the so-called critic-agents. A number of the non-advertising agents are among our regular subscribers to REWRITE and so well known to us.

The question of putting writers and agents together raises several problems. It does no one any good for example, for us to put you in touch with an agent, if you are not salable; it simply wastes the agent's time and ruins our reputation with the agents. A number of the best ones regularly read any ms. we approve, although they would not read it, if the author came to them "off the street" as it were. Many of the critic-agents shove a lot of worthless mss. into editorial offices in the hope that some of it will stick and they will earn a 10% commission. We do not do business with the "10% boys". (Incidentally, we never split commissions. When we recommend a writer, we do it with no motive or reward in mind other than the author's best interest.)

Our chief stock in trade and that of those agents we are pleased to help gain profitable writer clients, is our mutual skill and ability to prevent an author's mistakes from reaching an editor's desk. Often, the greatest service we render a writer is to tell him frankly he is not yet ready to send certain mss. out. This is something the 10% boys or the fee peddling critic-agents never do. It takes technical and merchandising knowledge to exercise this restraint. And this, obviously, the above-mentioned incompetents have neither the time nor the inclination to develop. That is why our interest lies only in working with agents whose ability and integrity has been proven over a long period. We can make mistakes, but the best is none too good for the members of the NCS Family, all of whose careers and best interests we take very seriously.

Another problem: we fully appreciate that we must at all times have the complete trust of both the author and the agent. There are critics who send mss. either to an agent or an editor knowing that these will be rejected. The purpose, of course, is to "justify" the critic's fee. (We know of actual cases, where this has been done!) This type of critic does not keep his editorial contacts for for very long, although he may continue for many years to fool sucker writers. (Off the record, editors and agents, who respect this magazine's relentless exposure of incompetent or fraudulent critic-agents, have revealed a great many cases and statistics that have in one way or another come to their attention.)

With real reluctance we have been forced, by the pressure of practical experience, to adopt a policy of never recommending writers to agents or editors, whose work we are not thoroughly familiar with. At times, this is embarrassing to us. It looks as if we might be trying to build up a situation whereby we can charge a reading fee. But on Page 9, we have explained how writers read into mss. a value that is not there. In self-protection we have had to demand proof before recommending anyone to an agent. This can be: our reading of the ms., an editor's appraisal of the same, or an unimpeachable record of earlier sales. But it must prove the latent values.

"WOW IS ONE YEAR OLD THIS MONTH!

"Writers On Writing", the handbook, which was prepared by the staff of the University of N. H. Summer Writers' Conference, is now one year old. Since Bill has two chapters in it, it is not surprising that WRITERS' BOOK CLUB has sold approximately 100 copies this past year. It is very pleasing, however, to receive occasional comments from members of the WCS Family, which indicate its wide use by writers. In the same mail recently letters came from 2 subscribers. One was pleased to see "WOW" featured in a display at a local public library branch in West Somerville, Mass. Jokingly, Mrs. Marguerite Kelliher remarked: "I felt like saying, 'Shake hands, pal, we're friends.'"

At the very same time on the West Coast, a good friend of ours, Mrs. Bettie Kelley, on entering a class in Short Story Writing was pleasantly surprised to discover the lecture for the day was a discussion of Bill Harris' 5 points for blocking out a story or scene, and their application to stories in certain slick magazines. (It is very satisfying, but at the same time a responsibility we do not take lightly, that all over the country may be found teachers whose work with inexperienced writers we influence considerably.)

NOT READY TO DO BUSINESS

The April issue of NEW ENGLAND LIVING did not appear on schedule. We understand there are financial difficulties to be ironed out by the publisher. We cannot recommend writers should submit any mss. to this magazine until a regular schedule is maintained. We passed along Mrs. Dorothy Towle's demand for short fiction in good faith because she and Carroll S. Towle, director of the UNH Conference, are dependable folk. Mrs. Towle's call for mss. was made in good faith. But until conditions are stabilized, it's not a satisfactory market. We're sorry all around.

BROADWAY Magazine, Jackson Heights, N. Y., is out of business. Letters returned unopened.

A NON-PROFIT LITERARY AGENCY

The Shady Hill School writers' project,.. Mrs. Robert T. Paine, Jr., 2 Hubbard Park,. Cambridge 38, Mass., is an interesting one. A group of mothers, all of whom either have a contact in the publishing world or write and have published their stuff, are ambitiously trying to earn money for the School, a children's school in Cambridge, Mass. There are seven women on the committee, and there are about 15 other similar projects outside the literary field. They have such assets as the children to test juvenile material, and experts (interested editors, etc.) to help on special problems. They have been charging a 15% commission for sales; this goes to help the School. They have also given free criticism, but as we go to press they are thinking of charging for this, for the School.

THE BULLETIN BOARD

REWRITE'S article of comment on the short short stories we judged in the Contest sponsored by the National League of American Pen Women, was reprinted in the PEN WOMAN, very attractive and well edited publication circulated among the League's members. The issue we saw contained several articles helpful to writers. Hildred E. Bridges edits.

WRITERS' BOOK CLUB. Are you interested in some special field? Let us know. We'll be glad to watch the new books and notify you, if anything of interest develops.

Copyright Law. Every writer should have a copy of "Bulletin 14", which may be had for 15¢ from the Supt. of Documents, U.S.Gov't. Printing Office, Washington 25, D. C.

Get on the U.S.C.P.O. mailing list.

One of the ways we get a lot done here at WCS House is by (1) keeping everlastingly at our jobs; (2) using our time efficiently in every way possible; and doing a job immediately whenever it forces itself upon our attention. It is amazing how much you can get done if you plan your work, yet are not unwilling to jump from one job to a very different one for the sake of cleaning up your slate. Try it some day and see.

The Authors' League has voted out its unpopular and unworkable "Assessment Plan" to raise money from its more successful writer members. It has replaced it with an equally impractical voluntary plan. There is not the least doubt that the League needs money for all of its many activities in behalf of the much trodden upon authors. But this isn't the way to get money. There are too many taxes, without adding another.

For years REWRITE has suggested a simpler and more practical method. We would like to see all writers members of the League. The membership at present consists for the most part of several thousand professional writers. It does not include the thousands upon thousands of small or part-time free lances who nevertheless do in the aggregate a huge amount of the total writing. And there isn't a guild for trade writers. This is wrong.

The following markets have recently stated they are overstocked:

CHILD LIFE, 136 Federal St., Boston 10, Mass.
STORYLAND, Christian Board of Publication,. Dept. of Church School Literature, St. Louis 3, Mo.
LITTLE FLOWER, 1125 So. Walker St., Oklahoma City, Okla., (poetry). Does not pay now.
The DESERT Magazine, Randall Henderson, Palm Desert, Cal., (poetry). Query first.
OUR DUMB ANIMALS, A.A.Swallow, 180 Longwood Ave., Boston 15, Mass., (poetry). Prose: 300 to 400 words. No fiction. Sends a long, detailed rejection slip.

CAN YOU CRITICIZE YOUR OWN MSS?

One problem we run into frequently with a writer is a lack of objectivity so far as a ms. or an editorial report upon it is seriously concerned. It is a sad commentary upon most writers that their need for success is so desperate that they read into even the slenderest gleam of hope the actual eventuality they constantly dream. A sale!. It is pathetic how so many writers will fool even themselves in trying to make face before the world.

None of us can ever succeed in being completely realistic concerning our brain-children. We conceived them, therefore, they must be good. We are like the doting mother, who sees no wrong in her child. Yet if we are to gain any lasting success we must be able to pick our products apart and evaluate them—cooly, competently and impersonally—as any potential editor or reader will in the long run do.

There is a time for doing this. Not when we are actually writing the particular mss. Then we should throw ourselves wholeheartedly into the act of creation. Emotion must take over, the mind must give way. There's small satisfaction in appraising one's loved one, critically and intellectual at the very moment of making love. But before you write a given piece and afterwards there are opportunities for self-examination.

Non-professionals have said to me, when I was serving as a dramatic critic, "Oh, but I should think it would take away a lot of the pleasure to watch the wheels go 'round." It is true that a long succession of badly organized and poorly cooked meals can destroy one's pleasure in eating. But does not each and every woman enjoy the privilege of dining out, & so being able to observe critically someone else's cooking? Prof. G.P.Baker, I recall, once politely rebuked this type of non-professional commentator, who was passing some time pleasantly by trying to learn playwriting in the old 47 Workshop. The Theater was Prof. Baker's life and he resented "dabblers". So when this woman gushed at him one time, seeking to make an impression, he replied: "One can learn something even from a bad play." And in 30 years of working hard with words, I have come to understand "GP's" secret meaning for the word "learn". To understand some new facet, some new technical device, of the Theater was like discovering God. In real life "GP" was constantly heckled by jealous faculty colleagues and university intellectuals, who could not understand his love for something they thought tawdry, artificial and unimportant. But in the real life which he and his beloved Workshop Company mounted on a stage, he really lived. He was God almighty Himself, breathing life into inanimate clay. To anyone who has really tasted it, this is heady wine. The characters you actually make "come alive" on printed page or stage, are more real than any of the ones you meet in daily life. At the very least you know their intellectual, and emotional innards better than you do those of a majority of your neighbors.

So, I tell writers that there is a critical phase in dreaming up or revising a story that can be creative. Not many writers have it, but it is possible, if they have the imagination to reach for it. And it develops out of that ability I mentioned in the second paragraph of this article, the skill to examine one's own flesh, so to speak, in an objective manner. One of the most thrilling things I know is to work on a story, testing intellectually the emotional phases of your dream, and having them, one by one, prove to be so sound and logical that they throw you back to a renewal of your emotion that leads you inevitably and relentlessly to a higher level until eventually the story is finished. But again, this is another phase of that eternal and immutable act of creation which joins any finite mortal sharing in it, with the Infinite, the source of all life. There is no greater satisfaction in life.

This ability to judge yourself critically and with professional competence, is not an art that one may pick up carelessly. As the razor-sharp knife is harmless in the hand of one who understands it, but will cut him who plays with it, so the ability to appraise a story and know whether it is good or bad, is a skill that must be assiduously cultivated through the years. Just as a pianist eternally practices to keep his fingers pliable & the willing tools of his imaginative genius, so must you, the writer, worship sincerely, and for artistic, loving reasons at the alter of your profession. In "Of Human Bondage" Somerset Maugham remarked that Beauty isn't a stone lying on the sandy beach for everyone to pick up at will. It must be dug for. You must develop the imagination and sensitivity to see it, when God in his infinitely generous munificence exposes it to you.

It takes years of cunning, accumulated experience to be even a second rate writer. A great many writers, would-be dreamers, drop by the wayside. They are the competitors no one needs to fear. The more serious ones of course are those, who have learned something of the craft of being a writer. But not anywhere near enough. Like the tortoise in the fable, you can pass them if you are willing to keep plugging. If you are willing to analyze your own weaknesses and overcome them, or turn them into a virtue.

Particularly in the selling field inexperienced writers tend to fool themselves. They will believe almost anything they want to believe. Repeatedly we have read mss., which a proud owner assures us "almost hit COSMO" & invariably the author has read into the rejection far more than the editor intended. A writer gets—nowhere by deluding himself or us. We've turned rejections into acceptances by viewing the problem realistically. You've

got to be completely impersonal and objective, however, to do this. A kind of "detective" who applies scientific procedures and makes an exhaustive, completely logical analysis of the situation. So far as possible you must allow no human fallibility or lack of truth to enter in. In a number of cases, we have made editors change their minds and accept mss. they previously rejected. Never could we have done it, though, if we hadn't put ourselves in the editor's shoes, & read his mind as accurately as it is humanly possible for one person to peer within the mind of another. In every instance, we examined, literally inch by inch, the editor's letter. What did he want? What did he mean by this? Or this? We took every phrase apart and decided which of several interpretations could be the only correct one. And if he meant it, did we have an answer, could we revise this ms. so that he would reconsider and react—favorably, instead of unfavorably? Such an ordeal is serious business; it is exhausting and exciting. But it can be faced successfully. Yet only if the author and his critics, and whatever agent may be involved, appraise the situation squarely and unsentimentally. Such a situation is no place to kid yourself or your adviser.

SOME LATE MARKET REPORTS

Few Americans fully appreciate the things their government does for them. It has collected information on practically every subject under the sun, if you only know where, and what to ask for. We have just been sent a circular describing "G.P.O.Style Manual". It tells you practically everything you are required to know about punctuation, headings and all the details of preparing a ms. It's available in a 50¢ abridged edition of more than 240 pages, or the complete 435-page edition, for $2. (Commercial books of a similar nature cost double those figures. Just write, enclosing remittance, to the Supt. of Documents, G.P.O., Washington 25, D. C.

BIT O' VERSE, Lirrel Sterling, Box 143, San Andreas, Cal., used to be a column (The Calaveras WEEKLY). Now it is published as a Quarterly magazine by the editor herself. It is attractively printed in large type. Many WCS poets were included in the Winter issue (the first we've seen). No pay, but prizes, and enthusiastic reviews and comment of the activities of subscribers and friends. A new editorial policy is being announced, it was stated, in the Spring issue.

The TIGER'S EYE has suspended. One of the writers' magazines, we are informed, stated recently that it was in the market. This is not true. We have seen the printed slip one of our Minute Men recently received.

GOOD HEALTH NEWS, Jay G. Hobson, Box 563, Glendale, Cal., is not in the market. Its editorial requirements are taken care of for some time. The editor replied promptly, and courteously to our inquiry.

"AND THE TRUTH SHALL MAKE YOU FREE"

This is a time of loyalty tests. Not only of loyalty to our country, but to our chosen profession, especially if it be writing. There are many loyalty Tests that come to all of us writers. Here is a questionnaire which embraces some of these Tests:

(1) Repeated Rejection Slips. If we can take them, and keep on writing, they test our loyalty to our decision to become writers. Our decision to become good writers. Can we?

(2) The absolute need for much practice writing and rewriting. Can we face it?

(3) The necessity to give up almost all extraneous pleasures, and to be slaves to our craft. Have we the grit to do this?

(4) The will power to choose only clean and constructive themes? Are we willing to do it in the face of apparently large sums awarded to shoddy and meretricious themes?

(5) The decision to stick to facts, to verify all direct statements. Are we willing to forego the easier way of wide and careless, irresponsible swings?

(6) The resistance to discouragement and to the effects of slow progress. Can we resist the insidious effect of this kind of "water dripping on stone"?

(7) The ability to forget the past, live in the present & anticipate the future. Have we this kind of courage?

(8) The gift of imperviousness to praise by our friends and relatives. Can we overcome a very human weakness for blandishments?

All these, and more too, test our loyalty to our Determination to become Good Writers.

What is "Good Writing"? The simplest definition I can think of is: Any piece of writing—story, poem or article—that appeals to one or more persons, to the extent that they are pleased, their better natures satisfied and their spirits elevated by the reading of it. For a convincing example of the finest, most persuasive writing in the English language, read the book of Ephesians.

William S. McKee

We think our good friend Bill has written a good piece here himself. While we believe everyone must view these ideas differently, and there are many degrees of seriousness to writing, the essential and eternal truth we all must face, is contained in this article by one of our valued subscribers.

Has the battle of unpaid for reprints got to be fought all over again in the Pulp magazines? A letter to the Writer's DIGEST is of the opinion that it has. Then let's go!

NEWS AND COMMENT

RADIO MIRROR, 205 East 42nd St., NYC 17, is still a poetry market, although it now uses only about three poems (under 30 lines) and does not carry Ted Malone's editorial credit line. Pays $10 for each poem used, but it requires you to enclose the boxed rules for submission and affirm that the poem is your original, unpublished work. In plain words, you have to buy a copy of the magazine each time you submit a poem. Box-top merchandising! Huh! (25¢ a copy.)

DOUBLEDAY & CO., Howard S. Cady, 441 Phelan Bldg., San Francisco, Cal., is the address of this firm's West Coast editor. Mary Lou Mueller is again reading mss. and aiding Howard Cady, a good friend of REWRITE. Howard plans to be in Los Angeles 3 or 4 days, at the beginning of each month. He will also visit Portland and Seattle four times every year, and will make trips to Utah, Colorado, New Mexico & Arizona at least twice. Western writers can reach him at the Frisco address. Nice, friendly fellow.

VOICES, Harold Vinal, Box C, Vinalhaven, Maine. This a change of address, as of May 1.

"GRIT" BUYS AS FOLLOWS:

GRIT, James W. Sheen, feature editor, Williamsport, Pa., sends a form letter to contributors stating its requirements:

Ill. features—300 to 750 words outstanding personalities or subjects of interest to or about small towns. 1 to 4 photographs.

Women personalities—up to 300 words. 1 Picture. Groups of women engaged in unusual activities, up to 750 words and 4 pix. 'Teen age girls and younger boys & girls, 250 words and 1 photograph.

Odd, Strange & Curious Page—Good pix & 100 to 200 words. Also, short sport articles, 1 or 2 pix. Home and auto repair pix.

GRIT pays $3 for each picture and about 2¢ per word for text. $1 each for poems.

ANALYSIS OF A GOOD MARKET

PROFITABLE HOBBIES, Theodore M. O'Leary, 24th & Burlington, Kansas City 16, Mo., is a profitable article and filler market. It's been building up fast in the past few years and so is sometimes slow in answering queries (which it is a good idea to make in regard to article ideas), but the editor is a fine chap to do business with. And he makes generous payment for the ideas he likes.

Here are the departmental features:
THIS HOBBY WORLD—pays $1 for each short item (original or news item) and uses the byline of the author submitting. Addresses of hobbyists written up are desired.

Continued on Page 12

IT CAN HAPPEN TO YOU

What this country needs is fewer "shoddy" materials, less inferior workmanship. Bill was doing a little repair job around the house. It involved a small pair of hinges. Bill's no expert with tools, but he started trying to make things when he was all of seven. He wasted several screws simply because all of the heads were so buttery they couldn't take being screwed home even once! To put such a form of material on the market is to commit petty thievery. But manufacturers back away behind the excuse that high prices make the supplying of their public with third rate—"garbage" an unavoidable necessity. The public would be even sorer, if they couldn't get screws that can't be used once, or inferior houses that will fall down or blow away before the mortgage is half paid off.

For writers there is an important principle behind this little anecdote. If you are a good workman, do an exceptional job whenever you submit even a routine story or article, your chances of making a sale are going to be much better. True, you run a risk that the editor will drop dead from shock.. But on the whole the percentage favors that he will recover and be so eternally grateful that he will remember you, even if he finds your first two or three mss. unavailable. I suggest you try submitting an outstanding, a superior piece of well organized and neatly typed, professional appearing writing. You may get a shock yourself, and discover that editors after all really have a heart.

ALWAYS REACH FOR A ROYALTY

A writer who shall be nameless told us in a recent letter about a sad experience. She wrote a short piece for a well known editor of an equally well known professional magazine. That was 30 years ago. She was paid a small check, and was pleased to see her bit reprinted with a number of others in a book. However, the book has been selling steadily all these years, and our author friend some weeks ago received a request that she bring the article up to date for a new, revised edition.

I expressed my opinion rather frankly regarding an editor who would publish material under such conditions of personal profit and lack of consideration of his authors. A writer obviously is in no position after 25 years, to demand extra payment. Presumably, all rights were sold as one. Tactful handling of the matter, however, might result in the editor being persuaded voluntarily (under pressure, if any practical way can possibly be devised to apply pressure) to make a settlement of the author's just claim for further payment.

The point is, though, that the author always should limit publication, if possible, to one time only. In this case, the authors of the reprinted articles should most sure-

ly have received additional payment for the books rights to their material. This could, conceivably have been a lump sum, or a royalty agreement. Perhaps no one could at the time have foreseen the perennial success of the book. But if our friend had had the experience necessary to prompt her to ask for a royalty, she would have been a rich woman today.

In general, it is always wise to take the risk of a small royalty rather than a lump-sum. The author who is hard up or too easily persuaded by a nice little extra check is usually the loser. Years ago, Bayard Veiller was reported to have parted with all his rights to a melodrama, "Within the Law" for $500. The play was a hit and the producer—as a result of his gamble, made thousands.

A writer is smart to try to see all of the angles. No one can look around a corner and see what the future will bring. But a writer can study his market and guess whether a publisher can use a ms. in more than 1 way. If the publisher is likely to reprint magazine material in book form, the author must tactfully and diplomatically argue for good terms. If the publisher won't grant a royalty, the writer should ask for an agreement: a flat payment now; but if the book goes on to sell so many copies, another payment. Often a publisher will underestimate the value of a book. The author who is skilful and is willing to bide his time, will cash in.

There is no sense in being arbitrary. Get the best terms you can. Sometimes your name in lights, or the willingness of the editor and publisher to continue to spend money on a book, or to keep it in print, is worth to you more than a hunk of cash. Consider all angles and get what you can. And remember a day will come when you have a public. Then, by golly, the shoe is on the other foot. The editor or publisher will be asking the favors of you, and you can make him wriggle or pay through the nose. But even then it's often better to be generous. Help the other guy to make a little dough, and he'll be hustling more to help you. Don't try to skin the other fellow, and don't let him skin you.

THE BULLETIN BOARD

CLOVER, D.C.Petry, Box 215, Falls Church, Va., has been announced as a digest-size poetry and short story magazine.

SONGBOAT Column, Lucile Coleman, 166 Park Ave., Fort Richmond, Staten Island 2, N.Y., is now being reprinted weekly in the Hammond, Ia., SUNDAY SUN. (Pays only in prizes.)

Lucile Coleman reports that FARM JOURNAL, Philadelphia, Pa., is "overstocked", & that The INSTRUCTOR, Dansville, N. Y., doesn't accept "original poems".

Help us to check markets. Send us all the news you get. We will return the favor.

A SHEAF OF PRIZE CONTESTS

PLAYS, The Drama Magazine for Young People, 8 Arlington St., Boston 16, Mass., is offering $500 in prizes for one-act plays suitable and appropriate for production by boys & girls of intermediate, junior & senior high age. For details, address as above. Closes: July 1, 1950.

The JOHNS HOPKINS PLAYSHOP, Homewood, Baltimore 18, Md., offers $100 in its annual full-length play contest. A registration fee $1. For details: address as above. Closes: July 1, 1950.

Dept. of Writing, Speech & Drama, The Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, Md., offers a prize of $150 for the best original television script. Address as above. Closes: July 1, 1950.

TWAYNE Publishers, Inc., 42 Broadway, NYC 4, is offering $100 advance royalty in its 2nd annual First Book Award. Open to any poet, if he or she has not previously had a book published. Write for further details. Closes: July 15, 1950.

ARTS OF THE THEATER FOUNDATION, Inc. 419 W. 55th St., NYC 19, two awards of $2,000 each to be made by April 15, 1951, for the "best full-length" plays. Apparently an annual award, this contest carries the unusual rule that "no previous entry may be re-submitted". Closes: Sept. 15, 1950.

The KALEIDOGRAPH PRESS, 624 No. Vernon Ave., Dallas 8, Texas, is holding its 20th annual book publication contest. Prize is publication on a 10% royalty basis. One ms. of 500 to 800 typewritten lines may be entered by a contestant. Closes: May 31, 1950

Albert Ralph Korn Cinquain Contest. In several poetry magazines including KALEIDOGRAPH, Mr. Korn, a REWRITE subscriber, is offering: first, a $5 prize for the best cinquain published during 1950. Second, these winning poems will be considered by Mr. Korn & Leslie Nelson Jennings for grand prizes of $15, $10, and $5.

FOLIO, 4834 No. Ashland Ave., Chicago 40, Ill., offers $50 for the most outstanding poem it publishes in 1950.

European Edition, N.Y.HERALD TRIBUNE with publications in at least 18 countries, opened a world-wide short story contest. Prizes including a $5,000 first prize and $20,000, in bonuses, are offered. The novelty is the fact that the winning stories can be made a pool from which all the participating publications can draw and print. The idea apparently is to encourage short story writing—outside the U.S. So American-written stories cannot win the first prize, but are eligible for the pool and bonuses. COLLIER'S is American representative. It will submit this nation's entries. So, consult it for details.

(Continued from Page 11)

HOBBY TOWN MEETING—longer write-ups of the successful and unusual hobbies various folk have developed. Purpose: to show others in a detailed and specific manner how they possibly can make money or enjoy a profitable pastime. A member of the WCS Family was paid a check of $10 for a six or seven hundred word feature which led this department recently.

HOBBY PARADE—Pays $2 for personal items of 150-200 words from hobbyists who have found a hobby that pays off. A small corner line-drawing illustrates each feature. A by-line is carred at the end of the feature whereas in HOBBY TOWN MEETING it is placed at the beginning. About 8 items are used monthly.

YOU SAY—Pays $2 for each letter used. Several are used each month.

CROSSWORD PUZZLE CONTEST—Pays $7.50 for the puzzle used each month. Non-winners are held over for future consideration or are returned if covering postage is included.

THE CENTRAL MARKET FILE EXPANDS

In connection with our Central Market File we are keeping a special envelop of duplicate clips: market tips. We plan to send them to writers as we see their need for market information. We will give spot service, matching a writer and a tip, where we believe it will do the most good. Since we read & clip practically all of the writers' magazines a lot of these accumulate. Incidentally, this service serves a number of purposes.

(1) It will help writers to make more sales and we will be giving individual help, that simply is not obtainable with such carefully planned supervision anywhere else in the writing world today.

(2) It will acquaint writers with the tips, which other writers' magazines offer, magazines they perhaps do not read.

(3) It will possibly bring pressure on some of the writers' magazines to see that their tips are not only up-to-the-minute but also accurate, because if a tip proves not to be accurate, we, and, we hope, writers in general, will bring it to the attention of each editor, who was originally responsible. (So far as we can, we plan to check items before releasing them. We will not knowingly send a writer misleading information.

(4) To encourage the collection of accurate data about markets, we will try to give any writer, who sends us one or more tips about markets, an equal number in return. This is an experiment, and we will have to work out a technique for handling it. But we think it will prove satisfactory all around.

Please put each tip you send on a separate piece of paper, and state the date you have received it, and the source. This will make our information sent to you much more worth the paper it is written on. For a number of years we have been giving quarterly prizes to WCS Minute Men, who have collaborated handsomely and loyally with us in checking market tips and information. The more writers, who do this, the more encylopaedia will our files be, and we can thus serve you better.

As we write this (very early in the month previous to our deadline for the May issue) we have approximately 1,000 individual markets in the magazine and book fields covered by envelops, in which there are at least one item concerning the editor's needs. In many cases these are based upon direct editorial comment to us or to our friends. In other cases they represent clips from other writers' magazines, or tips from writers. In both instances, they are apt to contain direct quotes, or they can be checked against other recent items in other magazines.

Our individual coverage is increasing every day. Ultimately, we hope to have material on every market open or closed to writers all over the world. (We already have one file on Agents, another on mail-order critics, courses, etc. On a moment's notice, we will be able to give you a report as to integrity and reputability.) But we also have lists of specialized markets. Each of these is filed at the beginning of the appropriate market list. (Our file is rapidly getting into first rate classified shape.) So we will be able to give our clients and subscribers unequalled market service and counsel. Never before to our knowledge, has such a market service been devised, or supervised by a pair of writers' counsellors such as Kive & Bill, who spend their working lives in this kind of specialized coaching of writers.

So, remember that REWRITE is pioneering in this very important field of up-to-the-minute market data. And remember that as you—each of you personally—support REWRITE, and participate in collecting information, this service will be better, faster, more accurate. If your tips do no more than substantiate information we already have on file, it is vitally important.

We have said for years that accurate, dependable reportorial market tip service was desirable and possible. Although several of the writers' magazines offer extensive coverage, none has seen the opportunity on the scale we intend to pursue. We have a number of plans for enlarging and improving personal service by this Central Market File. Your cooperation and active support is all that's necessary to bring these to fruition. Now at least, however, we have got our Plan under way despite the pessimistic and negative response of other editors toward it in past conversations.

With your active help we will carry on to a successful conclusion. Let's go, gang. What are we waiting for! Help us to help you!

HOW'S YOUR BATTING AVERAGE?

In this column members of the WCS Family, those writers who patronize REWRITE or other WCS services, compete on a friendly basis for prizes awarded quarterly.

Marjorie S. Scheuer
Poems: C.S.MONITOR, LYRIC.

Virginia Sievert
Poems: Capper's WEEKLY, THIS DAY (2).
Juvenile Story: OUR LITTLE FRIEND.

Helen Langworthy
Letter: "Tell Your Neighbor," Walter Mason's radio program (MUTUAL). (She won a Zenith radio.)

Edward W. Ludwig
Articles: SWING, THIS DAY, CONQUEST.

Kay Hill
Story: OUR LITTLE FRIEND.

Julia Winner
Poem: CHRISTIAN HERALD.

Florence M. Davis
Juvenile Story: JUNIORS.

Stanley M. Kenney
Articles: RURAL NEW YORKER, NEW ENGLAND HOMESTEAD, AUTHOR & JOURNALIST.
News: HUNTING & FISHING.

Lucile Coleman
Poems: BOY LIFE, TODAY'S HEALTH, SONOTONE CORP. Prizes: NIAPE.
Juvenile Story: THIS DAY.

Winona Nichols
Article: HOME.

Rebecca Phillips
Story: TOPPER.

Carrie Esther Hammil
Story: OUR LITTLE FRIEND.
Article: BUILDERS.

Helen S. Neal
Lectures: Drury College Writers' Conference, Christian College, Theta Sigma, & Univ. of Missouri School of Journalism.

Addresses:
TOPPER, Modern Age, Inc. 9620 So. Yates, Chicago 17, Ill. (Give-away for milk dealers.)
SWING, 1102 Scarritt Bldg., Kansas City 6, Mo.
LYRIC, Box 2552, Roanoke, Va. qu. $1 a year.

The FREE LANCE RADIO & TELEVISION WRITERS' Market List, 1950 Edition. Albert N. Perkins $1.50. Now in its 7th year, this is as reliable a market index as can be prepared on a very unstable industry. The editor is managing editor of SPORT Magazine and instructor in Radio and Television at N.Y.University.

Sorry, quarterly winners got crowded out.

YOU ARE THE ONLY ONE THAT COUNTS!

A great many writers keep their eyes on a rival writer and make odious comparisons as to their own imperfections. That is foolish and profitless. The only writer that matters so far as you are concerned is—you. There is no point in feeling badly if someone has 63 mss. in the mail and you have only 49? A single ms. sent to the SAT. EVE. POST could balance 500 sent to magazines that pay very little. That is speaking in terms only of a monetary nature.

But every writer is a different personality with different goals. If you are a novelist, there is no reason for you to crucify yourself because you can't write several books a year. Maybe the fellow who can has an unfulfilled wish that he could write one of the classics of all time. Ordinarily, a poet who grinds out ten poems a day, does not write more than one poem in the bunch. The rest are verse. Or worse. Recently, we have been hearing a lot about a poet, who claims to have stopped counting after he wrote his 50,000th sonnet. Personally, I would rather have written just one of Stephen Foster's immortal songs than all of those 50,000 "sonnets". You can tell a good deal about a man's quality by what he considers his great "accomplishment".

Not everyone is born to the purple. Blue ribbons or a fat bank account are not always a sign of superiority. Elva and I have aided writers who have hit the jackpot in literary and top slick magazines. We have also helped writers who after three revisions or more have sold a Sunday School story for $1 or perhaps two! We are just as proud of the latter's triumph as when we have helped the big writer to sell a book-length or serial, let us say to COSMOPOLITAN. The former some times represents a greater personal victory over materials and circumstances. We are interested in helping writers achieve the full potentiality of their character and spirit, as well as their talent. If you write but a single line that inspires the human race or gives comfort to one aching heart; if you in some painstaking way reach the full stature of your potential as a writer, no matter how small that potential, you have accomplished more than the genius, who dissipated & wasted a God-given gift.

The only writer who counts is you. You're racing only against yourself. And no matter how your methods or output compares against that of another, if you achieve even a small part of what you are capable of, or set out to accomplish, yours may be a great victory of mind and emotion over matter. Sometimes the beautiful and romantic dreams we scheme up for ourselves are a gross misconception. God may have some other, lesser, but better use for us. If we accept it gracefully, and uncomplainingly make the most of it, we will not have lived in vain. You are a writer. If you only amuse and entertain, you've served.

IT SOUNDS LIKE NICE MONEY

GOLD MEDAL BOOKS, Fawcett Publications, Jim Bishop, 67 West 44th St., NYC 18, in a news release reports it has been getting an over sexed supply of pulp. Jim says: "Sex should be incidental to the story; not the theme & when it does appear, it should be credible. ...In less than 4 months we have bought almost 3 times the number of books we anticipated. We are not hindered by a low schedule and will buy as many good books as are offered, up to 3 a year from any author.

"We buy only original novels, mysteries & Westerns. Also non-fiction we think will sell in the mass market...We want good writing & will accept nothing pulpish in character. We like stories which move swiftly, surely and logically, with good characterization. And we can now use good War books.

"Gold Medal's royalty rate—1¢ per copy on the first 150,000 and 1½¢ thereafter is the same as most reprint houses, but, in effect, doubles the author's income because he does not have to split with a hard-cover publisher. Moreover all subsidiary rights: picture, serialization or foreign abridgement, etc. go to the author. Our advances are also substantial."

Our Membership List Is Private

We have received a letter from a prospective member which is an offer to join the Society on a certain condition. Well, we are always reluctant to miss an opportunity of adding to our membership but not at the expense of our principles. The author of this letter would like to make a trade with us. He will join the Society, he writes, "If you supply a directory of its members"—that is, their names and addresses. He reminds us at the same time that certain other poetry societies "co-operate."

You see, he is in the quasi-publishing business and wouldn't it be nice if he could make a deal like that? In no time at all our members could probably expect to receive offers from him to publish their poems (for a certain specified sum of course).

Now we simply do not believe in conducting business in that way. We think we have something worthwhile to offer and we are interested in offering it only on its merits. The Society does not make public its membership list because we feel we have a duty to protect our members from hunters of sucker lists. We know that many of our members have been bombarded in the past by "vanity" publishers and sellers of doubtful courses in versification. We refuse to be the means of adding to this spurious stream of mail order advertising.

OUR SENTIMENTS

On our left we quote from an editorial published by the Bulletin of the Catholic Poetry Society of America.

We receive frequent publishers' requests for your names. We invariably reply that it is a fixed policy on our part, that no names on any of our lists are ever traded, exchanged, sold, bought or otherwise swapped for material worth.

We do not, now, advertise WCS or REWRITE, and we certainly do not intend the services we offer to writers shall be turned into fishbowls for suckers. We consider it a reflection not only on the publishers, but also the poetry societies that are willing to make that kind of deal. Do you really think that publication by an organization of that type at either end of the string is going to advance your career? Don't be silly!

TIME TO WATCH THIS MARKET

VENTURE, Mrs. Aurelia Regnier, Witherspoon Bldg., Philadelphia 7, Pa., starts appearing October 1st. It's an 8-page paper for boys & girls (12—15), so material must be slanted to both sexes.

TRAILBLAZER, same as above. An 8-page paper for boys and girls (9—11). Uses stories 1,000 to 2,000 words, serials with chapters the same lengths. Articles: 200—1,000. Poems: 4 to 20 lines. Pays: ½c and up on Acc.

Mrs. Regnier is buying slowly for these 2 markets now. The tempo will rise after October first as the magazines get past a shake down acquaintance with their readers, who'll be getting acquainted with the new books.

A TRADE WRITER ASKS YOUR HELP

John D. Stenard News Service, John D. Stenard, P. O. Drawer 1556, Chattanooga 1, Tenn., who is a member of the "Associated Business Writers of America", and a REWRITE subscriber has made two offers to subscribers of our magazine:

(1) He will send a copy of his Bulletin for trade writers free gratis to any subscriber to REWRITE, who is willing to enclose 6¢ in stamps, the cost of mailing. No obligation, of course.

(2) John wants to get in touch with writers for trade journals in towns with population of less than 75,000 (none is too small). He wishes these writers to gather data on a fee basis for him. "They get me answers to certain questions and I do all the writing. The fees will range from $2 to $5 on each assignment.

We believe this is an opportunity for the responsible writer to make a contact with a founder-member of the A.B.W.A. Another member of the WCS Family commented recently in REWRITE how much he had learned from experienced writers like Stenard, Haviland F. Reves and Bob Downer.

THE BULLETIN BOARD

HORTICULTURE, William H. Clark, Horticultural Hall, Boston 15, Mass., publication of the Mass. Horticultural Society, offers annual prizes of $50, $25, $10 and $5 (3) for the best garden club yearbooks. Closes: October 1, 1950.

PATHFINDER, 1323 M St., Washington 5, D.C., is now using topical quips & light verse in its "Bypaths" department. Not seasonal, unless it is news. Rain or lack of it, no; N. Y. City water shortage, yes. deadline: three weeks before publication. They supply a list of the deadlines for each issue. Pay on acceptance. PATHFINDER is owned by FARM JOURNAL, Inc. (15¢ per copy.) It has a very big circulation.

NEWS OF THE WRITERS' BOOK CLUB

There are so many unusually good books we are finding it difficult to list them all. A number are being featured again this month.

THE MONTH'S SELECTIONS

THE WRITER'S BOOK. Presented by the Authors' Guild, edited by Helen Hull. $4.00. The most all Round, serviceable handbook available. A great book, full of "Know How", by almost a half a hundred big name, successful writers. Every serious writer should own it. You'll

EDITOR TO AUTHOR: The Letters of Maxwell E. Perkins. Ed. J. H. Wheelock. $3.75. A great editor, discoverer of Thomas Wolfe and many others, talks as a friend and mentor to his writers. Exciting reading. Good sense.

THE WORLD OF FICTION. Bernard DeVoto. $3.50 Written for would be novelists, it is fascinating reading for all writers desiring and entre into big time fiction writing.

FIRST PRINCIPLES OF VERSE. Robert Hillyer. $2. One of the best for poets. See: Page 4.

WRITING YOUR POEM. Lawrence John Zillman... $2.75. A new and excellent book for poets. A review on P. 4. Practical and helpful.

AUTHORS' GUIDE. $2. One of the best books I have ever read on ms. preparation. See P. 4.

THE STORY OF LANGUAGE. Mario Pei. $3.95. An excellent reference on the history & growth of language. Reviewed in this issue.

MODERN RHETORIC. Cleanth Brooks & Robert P. Warren. $3.50. This book is very practical.

BUILDING A CHARACTER. Constantin Stanislevski. Intro. by Joshua Logan. $3.50. One of the great books of all time for anyone, who would create.

HOW TO WRITE FOR HOMEMAKERS. Lou Richardson & Genevieve Callahan. $3.00. A much needed, very practical book for the part-time free-lance writing about domestic subjects. Contains notes about many useful booklets, etc.

CONTINUED RECOMMENDATIONS

WRITERS ON WRITING. Ed. by Herschel Brickell. $3. A very practical, all around handbook by members of the UNH Conference staff, including William E. Harris. Good general reference.

HUMAN NATURE OF PLAYWRITING. Samson Raphelson. $4.00. Based on a seminar by one of the most popular Broadway light comedy writers.

WHERE TO SELL MAGAZINE ARTICLES. Winston Allard & Emily C. Yin. $2.00. A new list that is very helpful, and less expensive.

ARTICLE WRITING & MARKETING. Geo. L. Bird. $5.50. Very practical and detailed. A book every non-fiction writer should read.

THE WRITTEN WORD. Gorham Munson. $2.95. One of the most stimulating books on writing.

WEBSTER'S NEW COLLEGIATE DICTIONARY. $6. No better dictionary for the price exists.

PLOT DIGEST. Kobold Knight. $5. This is the best book on Plotting we know about. We are exclusive agents for it and it is proving a real best seller. Sound and practical.

THE WRITERS HANDBOOK. $4.50. The most reliable market list in book form available. It has 69 articles of great value also.

BOOKS OF PERMANENT VALUE

CRAFT OF THE SHORT STORY. Richard Summers.. $5.50. A realistic, factual book on techniques of writing and being a writer. Summers talks the language of writers. You'll like it.

WRITE THE SHORT SHORT. Maren Elwood. $3.50
CHARACTERS MAKE YOUR STORY. Each.
111 DONTS FOR WRITERS. $2.95. 3 good books.

STORY WRITING. Edith Mirrielees. $3. One of the all-time best books by a great teacher.

FIRST PRINCIPLES OF VERSE. Robert Hillyer. $2. A basic book for all poets by a good poet.

THE MATURE MIND. H. A. Overstreet. $2.95. We are genuinely excited about this book. Try reading it and you will see why. It's great.

WRITING & SELLING SPECIAL FEATURE ARTICLES. Helen Patterson. $4.65. Perhaps the best of the books on this subject. A product of the Univ. of Wisconsin School of Journalism.

WRITING JUVENILE FICTION. Phyllis A. Whitney $2.50. A successful author tells how.

THE PSYCHOLOGY OF WRITING SUCCESS. Ed. J. C. Frederick. $3.00. Originally published 1934 this book analyzes many writer problems well.

These are only a few of the good books. We will gladly advise you & save you money.

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